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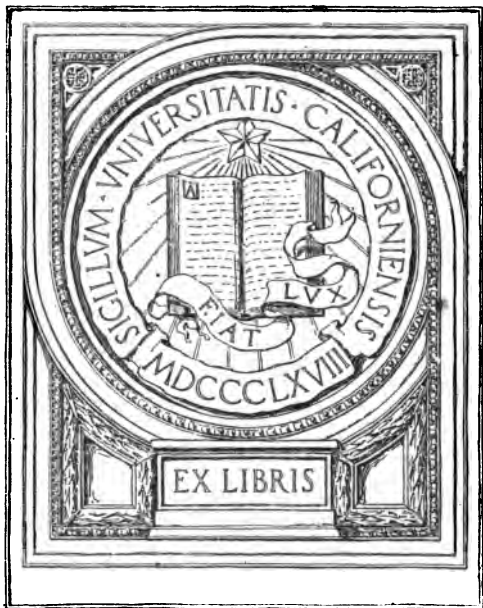
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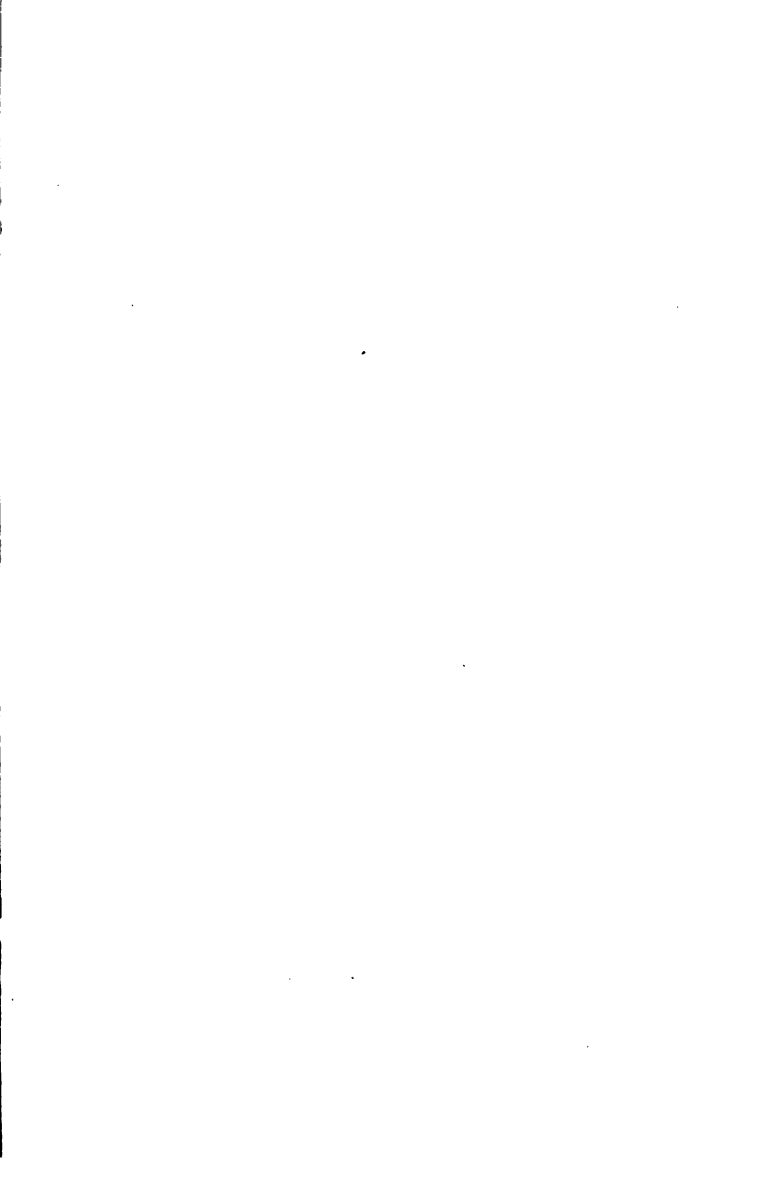
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SOME OUTDOOR PRAYERS

BY
GEORGE A. ^{AMOS}MILLER

"HE WENT UP INTO A MOUNTAIN
APART TO PRAY."

1894. OF
CALIFORNIA

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*Two portals guard the hidden ways
To the blessed life of love-filled days,
The Door of Prayer, and Gate of Praise.*

THE DOOR OF PRAYER
AND THE GATE OF PRAISE

Copyright, 1911

BY THOMAS Y. CROWELL & Co.

Published September, 1911

SAVE us, O Lord, from Sunday faces and the Churchly tone! May we live every day so well that all the days may be alike good before Thee! Help us to live so naturally that it may be as easy to speak of Thee on the street or in the shop as at church! Most of all, may our homes be our sacred and always used altars of worship and praise! May our lives, like the garment of Jesus, be without seam or difference of texture throughout that we may have but one face and voice and that our best!

GIVE us, O Lord, the wisdom to know just when to invade another's personality for Thee. No human skill can avail for this task most delicate and most divine. May we know when we stand on hallowed thresholds; and when the hearts of our friends are open to thy word, may we never hesitate to enter with the

salutation of peace. Let us never mistake thy guiding impulse and may we have the courage to follow into any place where Thou dost go before us!

SAVE us, O Lord, from the ecclesiastical atmosphere! Give us an out-of-doors flavor in our religion that may put the oxygen of spiritual normality into our souls' blood and charge us with the vigor and vitality of the clean and good universe about us.

SAVE us, O Lord, from mind-wandering in prayer! With a thousand voices the world clamors in our ears! The din of the street and the clatter of affairs comes through the closed door, and just when we try to shut out all but Thee, our thoughts slip back into the worn channels again. Help us to make the prayer channel so deep that it may never run dry;

so broad that we may unconsciously slip into it in the midst of the day's business, and so long that we may follow it always!

GOD bless the children and help us to be more like the Kingdom of Heaven ourselves! May we not be too childish to become child-like! Give us larger patience with the youngsters who fail to act like old people! Help us to understand the timid hunger after truth, the fearing struggle for self-expression! And may we not forget that we were children once ourselves and that we may not have improved much since!

HELP us, O Lord, to get out of the struggle, character! Help us that amid the cross currents and contrary winds and adverse things we may find our real selves and become seasoned vessels! Teach us how to

get out of every hard experience a new note for life's song, another spire for the heart's cathedral, one more candle for the soul's altar! May every strange visitation open a new door into a field else unknown, and all life be richer and brighter and stronger because of the unexpected and the unexplained! Give to us the fruits of experience — a more exalted purpose, a deeper foundation in reality, a wider range of human sympathy, a higher potentiality of motive power! Make our lives to be more human and more divine!

WE thank Thee, O God, that as we climb higher the path becomes plainer, and the mountain of truth lifts its summit ever more glorious before us. We look back on the mists in the valley and the tangled trail below us, and the great plan begins to unfold. May we count it all joy when

the way is steep, if it lead to clearer visions and better knowing of Thy ways and Thyself.

BE very near us, Lord, in the hour of new resolves, and make us to know that it is not what we intend to do so much as what the life within impels us to do, that determines our conduct. Give us then the new nature in Christ Jesus, that in any case to which we come, we may be constrained to do what he would have us to do. And since we never know what reaction some new situation may call forth, help us to keep very close to Thee every day.

DELIVER us, O Lord, from our hobbies! Preserve us from our fads and protect us from our fancies! Save us from the great idea that springs upon us from the path and takes us captive unawares! When

some great scheme encamps round about us, and demands unconditional surrender, do thou open our eyes to see the mountain side filled with a host of other good and great things, sent to deliver us from one-sidedness. When we would sell all and follow the big thing, may we remember that when the fever cools and the halo fades it will be a very commonplace little project after all, and perhaps quite worth some consideration. Keep us level-headed!

GIVE us, O Lord, a real love for the day's work, but deliver us from its bondage after the hours of toil are over. May we find it a joy to do the little tedious things that make up the monotony of the house or shop because they are part of the King's housework. And when the day is done, may it leave us, not with tangled nerves and jarring thoughts, but with

the consciousness of having done our best and pleased Thee well!

LORD help us to live the sincere life! Give to us that through-and-through honesty that accumulates a moral reserve against sudden strains! Keep us from trifling living and careless thinking and frivolous talking, that when the winds blow and the tempests rage, may we find ourselves untroubled and unafraid because we have found reality in the Rock of Ages.

HELP us, O Lord, to find in the tangle of daily experiences, the warp and woof of a Divine plan! To know that a Father's thought follows every thread of the knotted skein, a Father's heart beats with every throb of human perplexity, and that out of it all shall be woven the fair garment of abiding character!

DELIVER us, O Lord, from unreality and sham and deception and make-believe and play-acting! May we be of the Pure in Heart and Sincere in Life who shall find Truth and see God! Help us to find through the fog and froth the Rock of Eternal Reality and thereon to build our lives! Make us ever to live in the things that perish not with the using and enfold us with the panoply of Truth!

MAY we be very tolerant with the ignorance of some folks about us! We have a lot to learn ourselves, and surely Thou art very patient with us! And when we try to teach, help us to give liberally and upbraid not, nor show condescension toward our brother for whom Christ died!

HELP us, O Lord, to a kindly sense of humor. To-day's rugged

edges may furnish a smile for tomorrow. Yesterday's crosses are the refreshing memories of to-day. It may be that the bitter trials of now may yonder help to make the halls of Heaven ring with the glad laugh of the saints in Glory — bye and bye. Make us then to see the sunny side of clouds that rise up from the sea and form across the sky. And teach us the laugh that makes alive and leaves no sting nor stain!

GIVE to us, O Lord, a spirit of tolerance when we make some new discovery in spiritual things! Only yesterday we knew no more than these people about us, and by tomorrow we may not be so sure of it ourselves!

HELP us, O Lord, to find Thy self within the forces about us! When we discover how little the storm

and the flood regard us, we grow faint at heart! But if we being human, can command the light to shine in the night, and the winds to work our bidding — if we can girdle the globe in a moment and make the desert to become a fruitful field, how much more canst Thou, O Mighty Father, make all the strong Angels of the earth and sea and sky to do Thy bidding and work out Thy will for us! And if these be Thine arms about us, why should we be afraid?

LORD, be near us when we are discouraged by difficulties! Give us new power to rise and turn the world back again! May we have peace enough within to be unfretted by the strife without! Let us have an interior resistance so strong that we may be unannoyed by the pressure about us! Help us to be so busy with Thy service and Thyself that tempta-

tions may not much trouble us! And give to us the balanced life with its resources always greater than its needs and its eternal anchorage in Thee!

LORD, teach us to pray! Keep us from the sins of presumption in prayer! Forbid that we should walk with irreverent steps before thy throne! Deliver us from the ingratitude of constant beggary at the Mercy Seat! Give to us such a sense of Thy nearness that our wandering thoughts may be fixed on eternal things! Save us from our greedy clamor after the loaves and fishes! Teach us to talk less and listen more before Thee! Show us wherein, by Thy grace, we may help to answer our own petitions! Give to us much charity with each other, and some patience with ourselves! Grant to us a high ideal of duty, a loving enthusiasm for service, and a new vision of Thy face!



SOME OUTDOOR PRAYERS

WE grope about because we walk in the dark, O Lord! Help us then to walk in the light! We stumble and are confused because we cannot see. We strike our hands and our heads and our hearts against facts and folks. We think the world a very tangled place. But when the pathway brightens and we look back, behold, it was our footsteps that were tangled. Since we may not rise high enough to see the road from above, lead us step by step through the maze and keep us in the open paths where we may find Thy footprints before us in the way!

WITHHOLD from us, O Lord, more power than we can use with wisdom. Nothing so much un-masks our inner selves as our use of a little authority. Keep us very humble when we sit in the seat of the ruler, whether it be in the home or

the church or the world about us, and help us always to remember that we are but stewards of that which is thine own!

HELP us, O Lord, to find the key-note! When we hear discords on every side, it must be that we are ourselves out of tune! If by lifting our lives a semi-tone, we may hear every harsh note find its place in the chorus, then make us to be in tune; though it be with stretching of heart strings and breaking of some unworthy ties!

IF from all Thy good gifts, O Lord, I may ask but one, let that one be the spirit of kindness! Let others have fame and fortune and jewels and palaces, if I may but have the kindly spirit! Give greatness and power to those that want them, but give to me Brotherly Kindness! Make somebody else to be comely of visage, if only I

may wear a kindly countenance! May I never wound the heart of any faltering child of Thine! Make me to do the little unremembered acts that quietly help without intending it. Grant me to bear about the unconscious radiance of a life that knows no grudge, but loves all men because they are children of my Father, who loved them enough to send His Son to save them.

SAVE us, O Lord, alike from self-conceit and self-abasement. Help us to be so busy with Thyself and Thy service that we may lose ourselves and find our lives.

MAY we so live that we shall always be in good company when we are alone. May our thoughts be ever our best friends! May we find a hallowed quietness when the world drops beneath us as we rise up to meet Thee.

May we have a love for the silence of solitude — when we can find it; and help us always to find the best of all company — Thyself!

WHEN we feel rushed and nervous and very indispensable to Thee, O Lord, help us to remember that the world got along without us for many years and that our places will not be long empty when we are gone!

GIVE us something to do, O Lord, and grant us the power to get something done, though it be but a little thing. May we enter into the fellowship of those who achieve! Make us to know the sense of power that comes with the creative impulse! Let us be among the number of those who are entrusted with tasks worth doing!

GREATLY increase, O Lord, our sense of how our brother feels!

SOME OUTDOOR PRAYERS

May we always be able to put ourselves in his place, and do unto him as we would like to have him do to us. And when we do thus, keep us from any thought of reward for practicing the most selfish of virtues.

SOMETIMES, O Lord, we find across our path a flood of cares, and there is no way to the other side. After we have fretted and waited and doubted, we turn to Thee and find Thee standing beside us ready to roll back the waters and lead us through dry-shod. Help us to know better next time!

GIVE us wisdom, O Lord, to translate our ideals into the language of our daily lives! Help us to close the gap between the things we dream and the things we do! Show us how to make our deeds match our words, and bring us to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ our Lord!

MAKE us to be constantly aware of thyself, O Lord! May we not mistake caution nor solemnity nor ecstasy nor reticence nor much talking for spirituality! When we do feel Thee near, may the glad answer of our hearts welcome Thee to that which is thine own! Help us to live so that we may feel very much at home with Thee all the time, and walk together as friends in the way!

HELP us, O Lord, to see the good in folks about us as Thou seest it! Give us a love for people so strong that to help them may be a constant joy! Teach us how to be very charitable with those who differ with us, and very patient with those who fall by the way!

GIVE us, O Lord, a keen sense of proportion. Deliver us from the despotism of the one idea, and help

us to remember that some other people have very different ways that work just as well as ours, that things may not go our way, and yet go very well. Help us to live the balanced life that builds four-square with open windows toward all the winds and stars of heaven.

WE thank Thee, O Lord, for the things that are out of doors; for the fresh air and the open sky and the growing grass and the tiny flowers and the setting sun and the wooded hill and the rolling surf and the brown earth beneath our feet. They are all good and they all speak the truth, and we rest ourselves and get new strength to go back to the world of restless men and women. Keep us ever like thy good world, rugged and wholesome and true.

WHAT beggars we are, O Lord!
We rise up in the morning and

ask for daily bread! We go about our work and ask for all kinds of help to win in the struggle! We ask for many things for ourselves and our friends, and we go to Thy sanctuary on Sunday to implore Thee for grace to live through another week! Because Thou hast bidden us ask largely, we have become too greedy to remember to be grateful, we have been so busy begging that we have missed the gifts and the Giver. May we stop and count the blessings we have before we ask for more!

HELP us, O Lord, to find our only success in selling our lives as dearly in service as our days may bring opportunity, and to regard as the only failure, a coming short of what God may expect of us!

HELP us, O Lord, to live out on the open sea of God's all-reaching

love, and to move with the currents of divine power; to fill life's sails with the fresh winds of spiritual truth and freedom; to sail up and down time's glorious coast carrying a Heaven-scented cargo of better life to men; to be conscious less of effort and more of power; to see the needy men on the shore and bring to them the bread of life; trusting always that when the sails grow gray and the spars and planks begin to groan in the gale, Heaven's safe harbor may welcome in peace the captain of the Abundant Life!

HELP us, O Lord, to know how much Thou dost value us! We are lost in the vastness of Thy creation, and feel very small in the universe! May we remember that in Thy sight we are of more value than many mountains, and that Thou lovest us more than all the diamonds and

seas and stars! Are we not better than they! In the midst of the whirling suns Thou dost stop to care for us and number the hairs of our heads! When Thou desirest our service here we pass safely through the waters and the noisome pestilence is powerless before us! When Thou needest us yonder, the flood and fire become our chariots that bear us hence to stand before Thy throne and wait Thy bidding there! Make us to know how strong and ready Thou art to care for us in any world to which we come!

BE very near us, O Lord, when we grope our way through the wilderness, wondering, hoping, fearing, till some day we come trembling to the mount of God — and it is hidden in clouds! About its top gather pain or sorrow or doubt or disaster till its crags are lost from sight, and we are slow to believe that this is the Sinai

SOME OUTDOOR PRAYERS

we have sought! Surely mystery is thy habitation and clouds are round about thy dwelling place! We gaze in fear on the darkness and listen in terror to the trumpet and we say, "Let Moses go up!" And if our hands be not clean, and our hearts in tune, we hear Thee say, "Bid them stand back!" Assure us once again, O Lord, that truth is safe and that Thou dost protect Thine own! May we enter with reverence the clouds about Thy throne and find no harm to hurt us! Call us up into the mountain that amid the fresh breaths of truth and the close tones of the trumpet, we may meet Thee face to face, our Eternal Refuge and Strength!

GIVE us a spirit of fellowship with all living things, O Lord! The singing bird and the buzzing bee and all the humming swarm of a summer evening are busy and useful and after



their kind happy at their work. Thou hast filled the forests with things that breathe and move and call across the tree-tops. The grass hides a host of hurrying creatures, each intent upon filling its own little life with toil and depending utterly upon the sun and the wind and the seasons' change. If Thou hast endowed the smallest ant with industry and instinct more marvelous than man's, if the fireflies' lamp and the crickets' chirp and the sparrows' fall are of interest to Thee, help us to learn from these Thy creatures their lesson of trust and service.

WE would learn, O Lord, from the great sea in the deep places of the earth! Help us to draw from its unfathomed depths a reserve that shall deliver us from small tempests on life's surface! If we cannot understand the vastness of the watery des-

erts, nor its tireless beating on the shore, why should we marvel at the problem of the infinite energy or the throbbing of Thine unwearied heart of love for us! Change and decay dwell upon the shore, but the world of waters goes on changeless! The dry land sets up barriers and limits on every hand! The sea has no first nor last nor new nor old, but rolls on one eternal now, always changing, yet unchanged. Its crested combers rise for one wild moment and sink back into the deep. Here are changeless peace, and truth, yesterday, to-day and forever the same, and room that knows no bounds. Our lives spring up to-day into the free air, and then sink back again into Thine arms for rest and new strength to rise again to-morrow, till they break at last on the golden sands of eternity's fair shore, and when all the ships of time are gathered in, there shall be no more sea!



GIVE to us, O Lord, a religion that will stand the out-of-doors. May it be as fadeless as the sky, unchanged through eternal exposure! May it be as natural as the feel of the moist earth beneath our feet, as refreshing as the closing of tired eyes in sleep, and as restful as the waking to new tasks! Let our worship be as constant as the air about us that leaves no vacant space, and as strong as the flood that finds its way to the sea — its own! Make our devotion as simple and as fragrant as the wild rose blooming alone in the wood, just because it is a wild rose and God made it so!

WE thank Thee, O Lord, for Thy first great temples! With lofty cedar and branching oak Thou hast reared the living frame and stretched the vaulted arches! With tapestries of wondrous hue are hung the patterned walls! Through the leafy

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windows stream the golden rays of holy sunlight! With weave of flowering green Thou hast covered floor of aisle and nave! Mid shadows of mighty pillars we wait the breath of angel wings and anthem song from feather-throated choir! With all the birds and flowers and morning stars, we praise Thee, O God! Before the unhewn altar rock, we offer our oblation of hearts contrite and humble, and in Thy hush of holy benediction, we lift again our eyes, and in these Thy first-built shrines, we find Thee close beside us!

WE thank Thee, O Lord, for the solitary places! We rejoice in the sense of power that comes mid the great sandy silences where the brown earth stretches away till it meets the sky! Now we know why John dwelt in the wilderness and Jesus went apart into the desert to pray. The world of

men is crowded. Here at last in the untrodden turfts of desolation, there is room and enough of it! The brown hills of the mesa offer us a shelter and the shadow of a great rock is a refuge. We do not wonder that out of such silence and strength have come prophets and conquerors! May we drink from this largeness and go back to our tasks with power and peace!

WE thank Thee, O Lord, for the fragrance of the open air! As the heavens are high above the earth, so is the salt spray and the odor of the pine tree better than the ecclesiastical smell of musty carpets and stale atmosphere. When men would be holy they close the open windows and burn incense! Thy call to worship is with the lark-song in the open and the voice of many waters on the strand! We come with ancient forms and prepared faces! Thou speakest

with the ever-new language of the mountain and the shore, and when our hearts are found in tune, we forget the forms and ritual and all the pomp of men, and stand alone and glad before Thee our Maker, and our Friend!

WE thank Thee, O Lord, for the stormy days! When the rain falls and the wind blows, and the clouds move in regiments across the sky, they somehow seem to say the thing that cries in us for utterance and cannot be expressed! The glittering lights of a rainy night shine so weird and wonderful that we leave the dusty day and narrow earth and find a world of flash and gleam and shadow! The fresh and cool air of the storm soothes to rest our troubled spirits! The shock of thunder breaks the tension of tired spirits and jars us free again! The patter of the rain-drops on the roof lulls us to a sleep

both strong and sweet! The home seems more filled with comfort and content because the storm beats without! And when the clouds break and the king of the heavens comes forth in splendor to drive his frowning foes from the sky, he paints a gorgeous glory in the west and bids us take one rapturous glimpse through Heaven's gate while we catch our breath and think of glories unrevealed!

WE lift our eyes unto the hills from whence cometh our help! From the silence of the valleys and the majesty of the mountains we draw solace and strength! The strong battlements lift their heads in power for the faint. The upper summits shine with snowy peaks in glorious white and dwell in silence there alone! If the glory of the Eternal dwells anywhere upon the earth, it must be in these regions that rise ever higher till

they are lost in cloudless blue above the mists below! Could not these mighty fastnesses be some eternal playground for spirits of just men who love them because they are like Thyself, high and strong and true? If the eternal hills be more glorious than these, we wait with bated breath the moment when our feet shall stand amid their radiant summits and we shall see Thee face to face!

GRANT, O Lord, that when our lives are summed up at last, they may not be as a basket of broken fragments, a few thoughts, a bit of culture, a little devotion, something of service, some love for our fellows and some more for ourselves, but help us to live so sincerely and soundly that we may stand at last before Thy throne, complete in Thyself and strong in something worth-while that we have done for Thee.

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